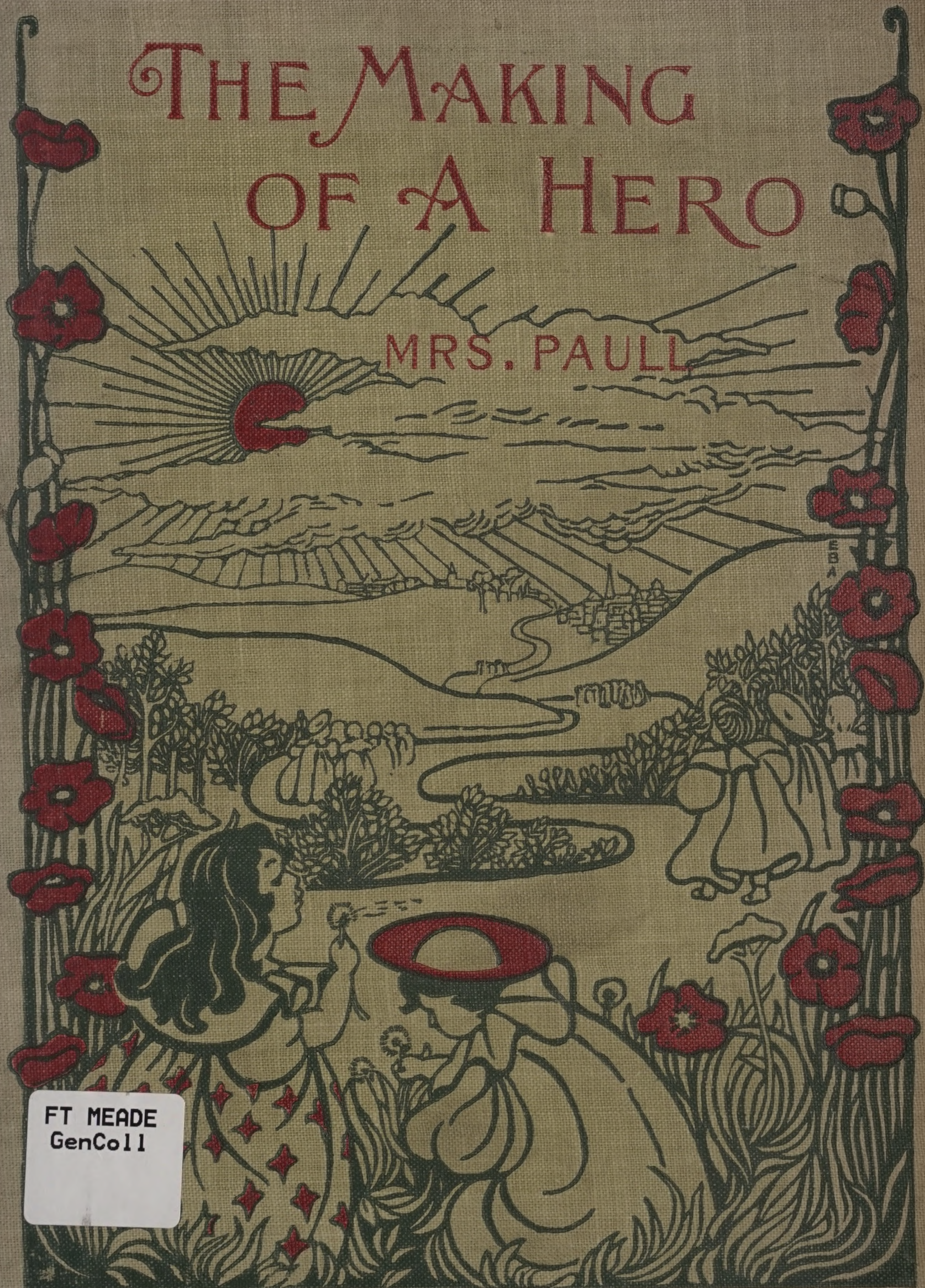


# THE MAKING OF A HERO

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THE MAKING OF A HERO  
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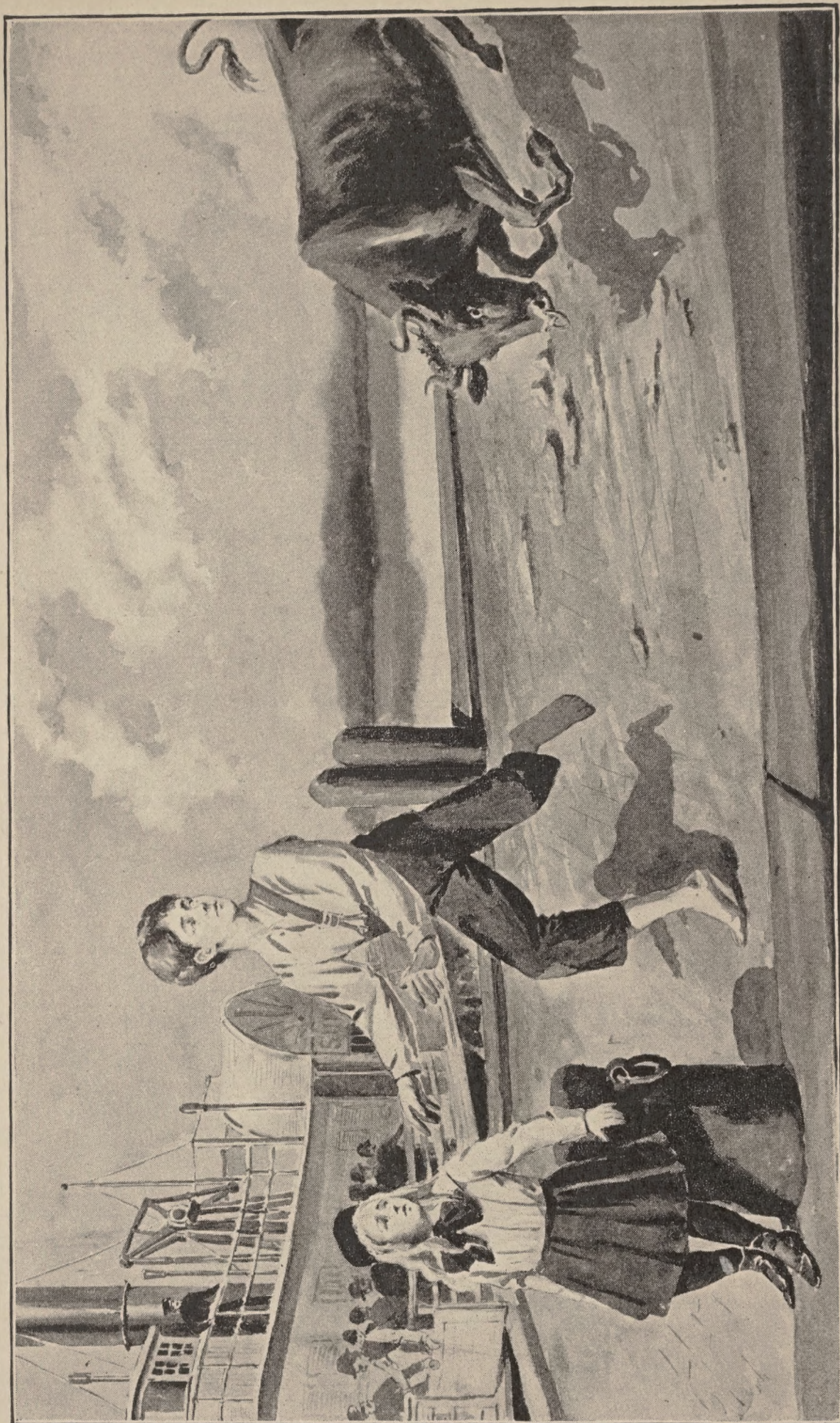
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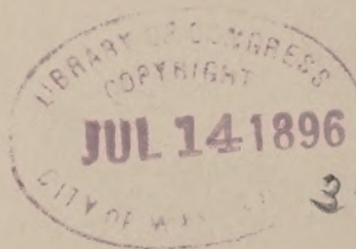
# THE MAKING OF A HERO

AND OTHER STORIES  
FOR BOYS ❁ ❁ ❁

BY

MRS. GEORGE A. PAULL

(Minnie E. Kenney)



FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York

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## THE MAKING OF A HERO

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A CERTAIN laudable ambition had found place in John Edward Hildebrand's heart at an extremely tender age, and it had grown with his growth until at last it was as stalwart and sturdy as John Edward himself, which is saying much, as any one who knew John Edward would maintain.

It was an ambition that overtopped the ambitions of his companions, but that was characteristic of John Edward, for he was prone to excel in whatever he undertook. Mind, I say in what he *undertook*, for in those matters which were perfunctory it was his pride to accomplish less than any one else under the same circumstances could have accomplished, or rather left unaccomplished.

It was not in the direction of scholarship that his ambition tended, as his various teachers during his slow progress from the primary department to the lowest grade of the grammar school could have testified. He had resolutely and persistently declined to learn, and had, moreover, excelled in arts which were calculated to beguile his schoolmates from the paths of learning. His slow promotions from one grade to another had not been monuments of his attainment in scholarship, but indications that all hope of awakening in him a desire to learn



and an ambition to comport himself with propriety had successively departed from each teacher in turn.

But in other matters that John Edward considered worthy of his regard he showed what he could do when his interest was aroused. It was a fact well established among the boys in town that he was the best jumper on record, and none of the feats of the last generation, handed down by tradition, equaled John Edward's accomplishments. Those sturdy, chocolate-colored legs, stained a rich warm brown by the suns and winds of twelve summers, had all the strength and agility of a grasshopper's legs, and almost beyond credibility were some of the stories told among the boys with bated breath, not only of running jumps, but standing jumps; and down by the wharf two clam-shells were firmly embedded to mark the spot where once, on a notable occasion, he had sprung into the air, and the place where his stubby toes drove themselves into the soil when he alighted.

And yet this glory had never turned John Edward's head. He executed his prodigious leaps with a solemn disdain, as if it was all nothing to what he could do if he really put his mind upon it. These things were but trifling occurrences, to be taken casually, and in no way to be regarded with pride. They had nothing to do with his great ambition, which must have been of spontaneous growth, since neither in his occasional perusal of the First Reader nor in his every-day associations could it have been awakened.

John Edward longed earnestly and above all other



things to be a hero. His ambition had not soared high enough to determine in what particular line he desired to cover himself with glory. There were ways and ways. Sometimes in the long hours in which he basked passively in the full blaze of the sun, sitting on the end of the wharf, with his legs dangling over the water which swished against the damp, mossy piles, watching for unwary crabs to crawl upon his chunk of sturgeon, he fancied himself capturing a gang of burglars, shooting Indians, or flinging himself in the path of runaway horses and holding them up. But as long as he could sometime achieve heroism, John Edward cared but little how the opportunity came.

It is the unexpected that always happens, and the day which was to fulfil John Edward's ambition dawned as quietly and uneventfully as any other morning of his uneventful life. It was half-past seven when the sun reached the point where it blazed through the shutterless, shadeless window, and beamed full upon the boy's face as he lay asleep. It awakened him presently, and with his awakening came the consciousness that this was "stock day," when cattle and sheep were loaded upon the river steamer, and when John Edward felt that his presence was imperatively required. He did not wait to woo another nap, as he did upon mornings of comparative leisure, when his most imperative engagement was with the crabs and the tide, but, jumping up, he made his toilet rapidly, and went down to the kitchen in search of the breakfast that he knew his mother had left out for him.



The extreme simplicity of his garments made a brief matter of his toilet—a coarse shirt, which, with its many and varied stains, was a whole volume of reminiscences, and a pair of trousers which his mother had thriftily purchased a year too large for him. This necessitated their being drawn up well under John Edward's armpits to allow his legs the untrammelled freedom in which he delighted, and doubtless when his mother had adorned them with the many and party-colored patches which gave them a variegated appearance, she had felt that her thrifty forethought was to be defeated by hard usage and neglect, for there was no reasonable ground for hope that another year would find aught of the original garment left.

It took a few moments to adjust a greasy rag about his last stone bruise, and then, taking his breakfast informally in his hand, and wholly eschewing the conventional habits of washing or adjusting his hair, he sallied forth, all unconscious that he was on the road which led by a short cut to ambition achieved.

His cheeks were bulging with the last of his bread and butter as he reached the wharf, and took his customary position upon the top of one of the tall posts at the corner of the wharf, where he could maintain a general oversight.

Stock days were always throbbing with possibilities of excitement. From miles back in the country farmers drove in their cattle and sheep, and brought the cackling denizens of the poultry-yard, and fat pigs which could barely be coaxed to move about,



## and Other Stories

oppressed with their own greatness. There were days when all the stock went aboard with as little remonstrance as wooden animals vanish in a Noah's ark, but there were other days when the bleating and cackling, the bellowing and grunting, raised a pandemonium dear to the heart of John Edward; and there were still more delightful days when a flock of frightened sheep would bolt and play "follow my leader" up the village street, only to be recaptured after much effort and loss of time by the village in general, while the steamer issued piercing, impatient shrieks as signals of haste.

But more and greater things were in store that morning, and John Edward little knew how he should crown himself with glory when he descended from his perch.

Beauty, the magnificent animal who had been at once the pride and the terror of his owner, was to be shipped to the city that morning, and he had been bewildered at the unusual proceedings, as half a dozen men with heavy ropes had made his escape from their control a matter of impossibility. He was angered and humiliated as he was led off captive, not recognizing all the precautions as compliments paid to his strength and spirit. He had been led along peacefully enough until he reached the middle of the long wharf, but then he tossed his magnificent head back and snuffed scornfully and wrathfully. The confusion, the crowds, the steamer with its funnels pouring out smoke and every now and then whistling shrilly, the mingled noises of the poor animals who seemed to recognize that they were



being sent to slaughter, and lustily protested—all this enraged young Beauty, and he felt that the time had come for passive endurance to cease and active opposition to begin.

He stopped, and stopped with an angry gleam in his eye and an air of decision in his attitude that foretold trouble. There was a speedy consultation, and it was agreed that no effort should be made to alter his determination until the rest of the animals were shipped and the wharf cleared. The possibilities were too great to invoke lightly. At last the dusty, spindle-legged sheep had skurried aboard the steamer, and were cribbed; the patient calves, with tied legs, had been carried on the vessel dangling uncomfortably over brawny shoulders; the hens and pigeons had been stowed away, and the wharf cleared of most of the crowd who were gathered there from interest or necessity. No one disturbed John Edward on his lofty perch, and no one noticed a little child who stood, Casabianca-like, where his father had placed him when he went aboard to see some friends off. He was in the saloon, and never thought of the child again, knowing he would stay where he was told to stay, and supposing that he had left him in a safe place out of harm's way.

Then, as the steamer blew a long, piercing whistle, the men tried to start Beauty on his way again; first with soothing cajolery, then with shouts, with thwacks and kicks. Like a king, the beautiful animal stood unmoved, apparently unconscious of every effort, but he was swelling with wrath. Under that shining black skin was a heart beating fast with



anger and obstinacy. Not an inch would he move, though five or six men threw their full weight upon the ropes to tug him forward. He stood like a grandly chiseled sculpture, and never quivered, though his nostrils spread with wrath.

At last, with a long, deep bellow which was his cry of defiance, he let himself slowly down upon his haunches, getting a better purchase for resistance, with his front legs stiffened like iron, held immovable by his tremendous weight. But the men who were tugging impatiently at him forgot to admire him in their impatience. There was a general feeling that when he did move it would be dangerous to be near him, and every one left the wharf except the men dragging at the ropes, the wharf-hands, the little child standing patiently near the edge of the wharf, and John Edward upon his lofty perch.

With an angry imprecation one of the men dashed his heavy boot against Beauty's white nose—a brutal kick.

It was as if the beast felt the indignity where pain would have been unheeded, and, with a fierce bellow, he sprang to his feet and lunged forward, snapping the ropes like tow. The men fled for their lives, and the deck-hands hastily dragged in the gang-plank, fearing that he might charge aboard in his wrath and wreak indescribable havoc.

Then a cry arose as the child was seen standing bravely at his post, in his little kilted skirts, his sunny curls floating under a scarlet fez.

Beauty saw that gleam of red, and another furious



bellow escaped him. All men were his enemies now, and he would avenge himself upon that scarlet-capped mite of humanity. No one could reach the child, and the people on the river-bank and steamer decks groaned at the thought of what must surely happen.

Beauty lunged forward with his fierce, sharp horns lowered, when, as people hid their faces that they might not see the helpless child gored and trampled, there was a shrill boy's whistle that for a brief second diverted the angry beast; there was a scudding of bare brown legs across the wharf, sturdy arms snatched up the terrified child, and with the full impetus of his swift run John Edward leaped from the wharf not an instant too soon, for he could hear the panting of the angry animal in his ears as he sprang.

He knew that anchored a little way from the wharf was a broad float loaded with fish, and if he could bridge the chasm between, the child need not even have the plunge into the river, with the swift tide swirling under the piles, which would be the dangerous alternative.

A breathless suspense, then a ringing cheer of triumph as, with an impetus that buried him knee-deep in the shining, gleaming fish, John Edward landed safely with his precious burden, on those sturdy legs which had done their work so well.

Furious Beauty plunged up the wharf, determining not to be baffled again, and as the terrified people ran in every direction, there was a sharp report, and the great animal plunged forward, his



death anticipated by the bullet instead of the knife.

But the float was drawn up to the wharf, and John Edward climbed up with the child, who had not been at all well pleased at the manner of his rescue, and his plunge among the fishes, to meet the cheers and applause of those who had called him a "ne'er do-well" before.

Not to all is it given to realize their ambitions, and the fruits of triumph were sweet to John Edward. He could not feel that he had not royally deserved his honors, for where was there another pair of legs that could have achieved that leap? He thought with meager appreciation of the quick-wittedness, the presence of mind, that made this escape from apparently hopeless peril possible, though that was what others seemed to consider first of all.

And afterward—no, this is not the moral; do not stop reading yet—he found it so pleasant to be a hero and be well thought of by his neighbors that he arose from those fishes a different John Edward from the young outlaw who sat upon the post.

When the child's father made careful inquiry as to how he could best advance the interests of the boy who had done him an inestimable service, he discovered his love for athletic sports and his lack of love for learning, and so a compromise was effected which bids fair to turn out an estimable member of society.

In the daytime John Edward has a fine position in which his heart delights, learning to become as-



sistant instructor in a first-class gymnasium, and in the evening, his eyes having become opened to the necessity for at least a partial education, he goes to night-school and really learns!

And treasured in his pocket-book are worn-out shreds of paper, once clippings from the local papers, describing the making of a hero.



## A MATTER OF HONOR

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THE "Giants, Junior," were in the best of spirits, for never since the team had been organized had they won such a victory. They had played a game away from home with a rival team in the next town, and in good, square, honorable playing, that had no element of rowdyism in it, had made a magnificent score. It was half an hour until the train should come that was to take them home, and, after receiving the compliments and congratulations upon their playing which the rival team and their friends generously accorded them, they scattered to walk about the town until train-time.

Somehow it happened that Ralph Moore wandered off by himself, an unusual thing, for he was such a popular boy that two or three of his friends were usually with him. Moreover, this afternoon, when his playing had more than once turned the scale in the Giants' favor, and he had been applauded even by the rival team, he wondered himself how it had happened that he had become separated from all the other boys.

"Well, I *am* a beautiful object!" he said, as, stopping in front of a store window, he saw himself reflected in the mirror at the back. His padded



foot-ball suit, once white, now bore abundant marks of its enforced and vigorous contact with the soil. His "foot-ball hair," which he had entreated permission to leave uncut for months, fell to his eyebrows in a decidedly tumbled condition, and he laughed as he remembered the remark of a boy's sister when the team sat bareheaded upon his porch waiting for the time to come for starting:

"You look like prize chrysanthemums, with your stems well wrapped up in cotton."

And in the heads of long thick hair there was a ridiculous likeness to the luxuriant tangles of chrysanthemums which had amused all the boys. The mud and dust which covered his suit were also distributed impartially over his face, and if the people in the town had not long ago become used to the appearance of their own teams in all stages of dilapidation and hard usage, Ralph would have been distinguished with a good deal of attention.

He got out his handkerchief and proceeded to remove some of the dust from his face, and encouraged a lock of hair to fall over the bruise upon his eyebrow. While he was doing this his eyes roamed over the contents of the window. It was a stationer's store, and there were the usual articles exhibited in the window, and Ralph was about to turn away when he saw a camera in one corner, marked "For sale; \$10."

Ralph had never owned a camera himself, though he had used the instruments of two of his friends, and had helped them in their work until he was quite expert for an amateur. It was his great am-



bition to own one, but as he was anxious to get a really good one, and as the kind he had set his heart upon was expensive, it was an ambition that seemed very far away from realization.

Just as a matter of curiosity and interest, for he had no thought of purchasing it, he stepped into the store and asked permission to examine it. The salesman was at leisure, and in the hope of selling the camera he brought it in from the window and spent some time in showing it and describing its advantages to Ralph.

"You see this is a folding camera," he said, as he touched a spring, opened the square leather box, and drew out the camera that could be shut into such close compass. "As you can see, it is almost new, and absolutely as good as new as far as all practical purposes are concerned. The corners of the box are rubbed a little, but they would look that way in a few days if you got an entirely new one, you know."

"It's a beauty, isn't it?" said Ralph, with warm admiration.

"It is indeed, and for a good all-around camera there isn't anything better in the market. Why, you can do anything with it," he went on as enthusiastically as Ralph himself. "Just look at this shutter. You can arrange it so that you can take a snap-shot and get a train going at lightning-express speed, and you can fix it so that you can take a time-view just as well. And then you can open the back, and regularly focus, just as you would with any camera, through the ground-glass, or you



can fix the camera according to this marked focusing-scale, and, getting your view in the finder, take your picture that way. And then, too, you can use either plates or films, for there's a film-holder and plate-holders both that go with it. It's a big bargain, for it cost forty dollars. The young fellow is just going to sell it because he has had a larger one of the same style given him, and so of course he don't want two, and he marked it down cheap so that it would sell right off. It's only been on sale since noon, and I suppose it will be gone by tonight, for any one with half an eye can see what a bargain it is."

"Indeed it is a bargain," Ralph said, for he knew enough about cameras to understand all the advantages that the salesman had described so warmly. "I wish I could get it," he said, looking thoughtfully at it, and thrusting his hands into the depths of his pockets.

Suddenly a wave of color swept up into his face, that made it flushed even through the dust and perspiration. When his hands went down into the depths of his pockets he had touched a purse in either pocket, and it reminded him of what he had forgotten, that after he had started for the game this afternoon he had discovered at the station that not only had he put his purse, with his own money in it, into his pocket, but that he had carelessly left the purse containing the funds of the team in his suit from the last meeting of the team, which had been held after a practice-game.

Ralph was the treasurer of the team, and the



## and Other Stories

collection had been large at that meeting, as several boys had paid up back dues. Altogether there was fourteen dollars and seventy cents in the purse belonging to the team.

The salesman went to another part of the store to attend to some customers, and Ralph stood planted before the camera gazing at it absent-mindedly, while his thoughts were very busy and his fingers were closed upon the fat, hard purse that held so much money. More than once that afternoon during the game when he had felt the purse bruising him in the rushes and falls, he had wished that he had left it at home, but now he began to be very glad that he had brought it.

Ralph had very little spending-money,—far less than any of the other boys of his set,—but there was one large sum of which he was sure every year. On his birthday, which was only three weeks away, the uncle for whom he was named always sent him a ten-dollar gold piece. He had never failed in this gift since Ralph was a baby, so the boy felt as sure of it as he did of his birthday coming.

If he used ten dollars of that money now to get the camera, there would still be enough for any casual expenses of the team, and then he could replace it when he got his birthday gift. It was the only chance of possessing that beautiful camera, and it was such an undoubted bargain that he might never again, if he waited for years, get another such camera at any price that he could afford to pay. He had wanted a camera of his own so very much. Of course the boys had been very



generous, as boys are with their possessions, but Ralph was too independent a boy to like to borrow all the time.

If there had been any doubt of his ability to refund the money before it was needed, he would not have considered the matter for a moment, but this was simply borrowing in the full assurance of being able to pay it back, and he was quite sure if the team had been there, and he could have asked them, they would have spoken as one boy, and said, "Of course."

As to waiting till he should get his own money, that was utterly out of the question; for surely such a camera would not remain unsold for three weeks. It was literally now or never.

A clock struck sharply with a noisy whir, and Ralph started. Eight minutes left in which to get to the train! That meant running for it, and there was not an instant to spend in thinking what he had better do.

Of course it would be all right to get the camera. Why not? And he dragged out the purse, hastily counted out the money, and, barely waiting for the man to wrap it, darted off for the train. He reached the station just in time to swing himself upon the rear platform of the last car as the train was pulling out of the station, and dropped, breathless with his hasty run, into the nearest seat.

Somehow he did not feel as exultant and happy in the possession of the camera as he had expected, and he was astonished to find a half-formed resolution in his mind to put the camera away and not



say anything about it nor use it until he had returned the money to the team treasury and thus made it really his own.

This resolution grew in strength, so by the time the train reached the station where the "Giants, Junior," were to get out, and he joined the boys on the station platform, he only answered vaguely, "Oh, that's some shopping I've been doing," when they asked where he got his package.

When he reached home he found that his mother was out; so, getting the key from its hiding-place under a bush, he opened the front door and let himself into the house.

He carried the camera up to his room and put it on a shelf in his closet, not even feeling disposed to look at it or undo its paper wrapping.

"There you'll stay till you're paid for. I wish I had never seen you," he said, pushing it out of sight into the corner. "If I'd known I was going to feel so uncomfortable about it, I would never have touched the thing."

He went downstairs again and started up the kitchen fire, put the kettle on, and made some other little preparations for the evening meal that he always made when he reached home before his mother.

The two lived alone together, for Ralph's father had died two years before; Mrs. Moore giving music lessons, while Ralph should prepare himself, by completing his education, for greater helpfulness in a few years than he could attain now if he gave up school and took any position in which he could earn some money.



There was plenty of time in the hour that elapsed before his mother came in and they sat down to tea for Ralph to think the matter all over and see things in a very different light.

He had had absolutely no right to touch the money any more than if it had been money lying in the till of the store. Suppose anything should happen that he could not return it? He could not ask his mother for it. "Dear, brave little mother!" he thought tenderly, "she has to slave hard enough anyhow, and I never can make it up to her, no matter how hard I mean to try when I am a man. I'd like to tell her about it, but I won't worry her too. I know what I will do. I will write to that man to-morrow and ask him if he won't take the camera back."

This decision made him somewhat more comfortable, so by the time his mother came in he was his usual happy self again, and gave her a very animated description of the foot-ball game and the victory their team had won.

The next day Ralph carried out his resolution and wrote to ask if he might return the camera. He was so sure that the man would be willing to take back a purchase which was such an undoubted bargain that he could easily sell it to some one else that while he was waiting for the answer he did not give himself any more anxiety. He had lost all his desire to keep the camera since he had felt so uncomfortable about purchasing it when he had not the money, and it seemed to him that if he only had the ten dollars back again in the team treasury,



he would be so happy that it would not make any difference to him if he never owned a camera.

It was a great disappointment to him when, in the course of a few days, the man wrote a polite but decided refusal to take the camera back. He was wretched over the matter for a few hours, and then he decided that there was still another plan to be tried. Perhaps the man would be willing to try to sell it for him. Ralph did not want to ask any one where he lived to sell it for him, for every one would wonder where he got it and why he did not keep it.

He wrote again, and this time the man returned an answer in the affirmative. He was quite willing to do this if he received ten per cent. commission.

"That means a whole dollar," thought Ralph, ruefully. "Well, it's the best thing to do, and I can take a dollar out of my birthday money."

He felt more contented when he had taken the camera down and knew that it was exposed for sale. Undoubtedly some one would buy it at once. Such a prize would not pass unnoticed.

But the days went by and no notice came to him that the camera was sold. He tried not to worry about it, thinking that each day brought him nearer to his birthday, when he would surely have his usual gift. It meant infinitely more of a disappointment to him than the postponement of his gift when, ten days before his birthday, Mrs. Moore received a letter saying that her brother was very ill, and asking if she could possibly come on and care for him.



There were a few hours of hurried preparation, making arrangements for Ralph to spend the time with neighbors, arranging about pupils, and packing a small trunk, and then the train carrying his mother away had steamed out of the station, and Ralph stood on the platform looking after it with a feeling of cheerlessness and desolation that was not wholly due to sorrow at his uncle's illness and his mother's departure.

What should he do if Uncle Ralph should be too ill to remember his birthday and not send him the ten dollars until it should be too late? He went back to do some few last things in the house that his mother had been too hurried to attend to, and when all was ready to lock up the house and go to his temporary home during his mother's absence, he went up to his own room and threw himself upon the bed with the most wretched feeling of remorse he had ever known in all his honest, straightforward young life.

It had seemed as if every day that had passed since his purchase of the camera had brought to him something that had intensified his unhappy feelings. Not a paper had he taken up in which he had not read of some one who had handled money which was not his own for his own purposes; and it was a very ugly word that described this misappropriation—embezzling! The blood would surge up into his face, and it would seem to him as if every one must know the intolerable sense of shame that made his heart ache when he thought of it. No wonder that he was moody and irritable and



unlike himself when he had so heavy a load to bear. He was almost ill from anxiety, and instead of dropping into profound slumber the moment his head touched his pillow, he tossed about, sleepless and miserable, for hours each night.

His birthday came, and with it his hope was extinguished. Uncle Ralph was worse, and only a loving letter from his mother came as a birthday remembrance.

“What shall I do? what shall I do?” That was the question that tortured him continually. At last the climax came. There was to be a business meeting of the team, but Ralph excused himself from attending, complaining of an aching and soreness in his bones which made him more inclined for bed. The deeper reason, however, was that he felt that he could not face the boys again until he had made good the sum he had taken from the treasury.

A scribbled note from the secretary, which one of the boys left at the door for him, told him that the team had decided to give a reception to the visiting team which was to play with them upon Thanksgiving day, and they wanted him to get to the next meeting if possible, when they wanted to figure up the probable cost.

Poor Ralph! He felt as if judgment had relentlessly overtaken him at last, and he had but one thought: to go to his mother and confess it all to her before he should be publicly disgraced. The hope that she could help him was but a faint, underlying one. To tell her about it—that was what he wanted most of all. There was just time



to make the train, and without even putting on his overcoat, he put his own purse, which contained sufficient to take him to the city, and the purse containing the depleted funds into his pocket and started off, leaving word with one of the children that he was going to see his mother.

Though it was a raw November evening, he was so feverish that he did not feel the chill, and when, an hour later, he was hurrying through the lighted city streets, he did not feel the cold rain beating against his face, nor notice the wind which swept around the corners.

He was near his mother now, and that was the only thought in his aching heart and confused head. The doctor was sitting in the sick-room watching his patient, and Mrs. Moore had come downstairs for a little rest. She stood by the parlor window, looking out into the dusk, thinking with a homesick feeling in her heart of Ralph, and wondering what he was doing. A boy came hastening along, and she thought how exactly he looked like her own boy in his general appearance and in his manner of walking, for it was too dark for her to distinguish his features.

He stopped in front of the house, and then hurried up the steps. Why, it was Ralph! and his mother rushed to the door and opened it before he had time to find the bell and ring.

"O mother!" he cried, with a great sob of joy, and his hot face was pressed against hers as he felt that he could bear anything now that he was with that dear mother.



She drew him into the parlor and closed the door, stirring up the fire that he might dry his wet garments; but he cared for nothing else except to tell her the whole story. He could not tell it very coherently. His head felt as if it was on fire, and he ached so intolerably that it confused him; but she understood, as mothers are quick to understand, and, holding his aching head upon her shoulder, comforted him.

"Now, dear, we will talk about it by and by—to-morrow perhaps. I will give you the money to repay that ten dollars, so you need not worry about that, and for the rest of the matter, we will talk that over together when you are rested. You are ill and feverish, dear, and you must go right to bed."

He did not care now what he did, and after he was resting those aching limbs in bed his mother asked the doctor to come up and see him. She explained that he had been greatly troubled about something.

The doctor examined him carefully, and told her that the boy probably had an attack of the prevailing influenza, aggravated by his exposure of himself and his anxiety.

The remedies he left reduced the high fever at last and quieted the pain, and Ralph slept as he had not slept before for nights. It was a trying time that followed, when he longed for his mother continually with all his heart, and yet knew he must be patient and do with only glimpses of her; for he was only uncomfortably sick, while Uncle Ralph was dangerously so.



The day after he came his mother sent the money for him to the team, and she wrote that he might not be home for some time on account of illness. His mind was so relieved at the restoration of the money and his mother's knowledge that he set himself to bear all the discomforts of his illness as bravely and patiently as he might.

It was Christmas day when the two invalids left their rooms for the first time, and Mrs. Moore was so weary from her long nursing that she looked almost like an invalid herself as she sat between her two charges.

"I have a plan," said Uncle Ralph. "As soon as we are strong enough, young Ralph, I propose that we carry your mother off to the Bermudas to recuperate, and do a little recuperation ourselves at the same time. What say you?"

"Magnificent!" cried Ralph, enthusiastically, a tinge of color coming into his pale face; and Mrs. Moore looked her pleasure.

"And about your birthday, my boy—" began his uncle, but Ralph interrupted him.

"O uncle!" he cried, in a grieved voice, "I want to tell you something."

Mrs. Moore slipped away, leaving the two together, and the boy told his uncle of his impulsive false step, the impossibility of repairing it, and the load of remorse that had tortured him.

His uncle did not make light of it, for it was in truth too serious a matter of which to make light. It had been appropriating trust funds just as surely as when a defaulting cashier takes the money from



a bank with the hope that by successful speculation he may return it.

It had been a matter of honor when he had been intrusted with the funds of the team to hold those funds simply in trust, and he had forfeited the trust. His punishment of anxiety and remorse had been a heavy one, but Uncle Ralph assured him that he had cause for great gratitude that he had been thus made to feel the full extent of his wrong-doing at the very outset. He would never yield to such a temptation again after this experience of its consequences, but, remembering how easily he had slipped from the path of honor once, would guard himself carefully, that he might redeem the past and prove his worthiness of trust in matters where the right and his honor were concerned.



## HOW THE TWINS WENT TO THE FAIR

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ROB sat upon one of the tall gate-posts, and his twin, Roberta, upon the other, swinging their heels and talking over the county fair, which was to be held the next week. It ranked second only to Christmas itself in delightful dissipation, and it seemed a very long time between fairs. If Christmas had not so happily broken the interval, it would have been even harder to have waited the whole year.

From the time the twins were fat little roly-poly babies, they had never missed going each year; but now, for the first time, there was much reason to fear that the delights of this great season would be withheld from them. They were facing the sad truth, as they had faced it each day for the last month, and wondering whether there was not some way in which they could avert such a calamity.

They must have at least fifty cents; twenty-five cents would not be of the least use; for if any one supposed that one twin would go anywhere and leave the other twin desolate, it simply proved that that person knew nothing at all about the Brown twins. Together they stood—and together they fell, it might also with equal truth be said of them;



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for what one did, said, or thought, the other did, said, and thought likewise.

They had one remembrance that sustained their courage at the thought of being obliged to stay at home when every one else would be enjoying the fair. They had thriftily saved every penny that had come into their possession since Christmas, and six weeks ago the whole fifty cents had been saved, besides ten cents over and above, which it is unnecessary to say could be expended in innumerable ways at a place of delights like a fair; but then granny had been taken with one of her bad coughs, and wanted a bottle of cough medicine. During the last few months half-dollars over and above those required for the actual necessities of life had been unheard of in the little family, and granny had protested that she must keep on coughing till she took a turn for the better, for "no way at all" could she think of sparing fifty cents for the medicine.

And then the twins had held long and earnest consultation upon the gate-post, their favorite court of decision. They realized just how many cents went to make up a half-dollar,—for had they not accumulated that sum, cent by cent, through the long months?—but they also realized that dear granny must not be allowed to cough because she could not afford to get the medicine.

They were generous little souls, and though they knew how extremely improbable it was that by any chance they would be able to earn or save the money again before fair-time, that did not alter



their decision in the least that they would buy the medicine for granny themselves.

They would not tell her until the medicine was purchased, for they knew full well that she would not hear of such a thing as letting them spend their fair money for her. Solemnly they slid down from their respective gate-posts, and trudged down to the village and bought the medicine. Rob asked for it, and Roberta repeated the order so that there could be no mistake; and then, while the clerk was wrapping it up, they stood and looked wistfully at the soda-water fountain, with its suggestions of coolness in the great picture of the Arctic regions that ornamented it.

They knew what soda-water tasted like, for, on one never-to-be-forgotten day, a lady who stood by the fountain drinking some herself had seen the little longing faces, and had treated them. That had been something to be remembered! But now a sudden decision came into Rob's mind.

"Poor Roberta! it was harder for her to give the fair up than for me, because she's a girl," he thought chivalrously. "I know what I will do. There's just ten cents left, and it's mine, and I am going to treat her to soda-water and have some myself; for I don't suppose we can ever go to the fair now, and we'll have the soda-water anyhow."

To Roberta's surprise and intense delight, he had escorted her across the store to the fountain and had bidden her order what she would like best; and the fascination of reading the long list of syrups and at last coming to a decision was some-



thing that for the time quite atoned for the disappointment about the fair to both of them.

But the memory of that refreshing coolness and sweetness grew a little clouded, and the keen desire to go to the fair grew stronger day by day.

"Oh, I just feel as if I could never bear it not to go, don't you, Rob?" asked Roberta, after a little silence. "But granny's cough is all well anyhow; that's something to be glad of, isn't it?"

"Of course," answered Rob, cheerfully. "We wouldn't have the money back, if we could, and let granny go on coughing, would we, Roberta?"

"No, not for ten fairs we wouldn't," Roberta answered most emphatically. "Only I do wish we could go," Rob went on, as he had said it and as Roberta had said it a dozen times that afternoon; and just then granny called the twins, and they knew that the freshly ironed clothes were ready for them to take down to the village to the doctor's wife. They went off happily, carrying the big basket between them, and still holding converse about the fair. It was pretty hard to think of anything else when the time was so near and the prospects for their going were so extremely dark.

They delivered the clothes safely, and then, as they were going out of the yard, the doctor passed them in his buggy. Stopping the horse and smiling cheerily down upon them, he said, "If it is possible for you two chums to stand a short separation, Roberta may get in with the basket, and I will drop her at your house. I am going right past there, and it is rather warm for walking."



## The Making of a Hero

In went the basket and Roberta after it, delighted at the idea of a drive, and quite sure that next time Rob would be the favored one, for the doctor distributed his favors impartially. Rob walked along slowly, snipping off the heads of daisies growing beside the path with a little switch he had in his hand, and still thinking about the fair. "It's too bad Roberta can't go," he said generously. "She's a girl, and she ought to have things even if I don't. I wish I could find some way of earning just enough money for her to go anyway; and then I could wait outside for her, and she could tell me all about it. That would be just as nice—perhaps."

It was a very dubious "perhaps," for, after all, what could even begin to take the place of really going to the fair one's self, and seeing all the wonderful things, and being in that lovely bustle and confusion? Not hearing about it, certainly.

"Hail, Columbia, happy land!" whistled Rob, as sweetly as a bird; and then all at once his whistling ceased, and he gave one great jump that landed him in the middle of the road.

A buggy, with a man in it wearing a linen duster and a high white hat, had just driven past, and he had drawn out a big red handkerchief to wipe the perspiration from his face just as he had passed Rob.

"I wish he'd give me a lift," Rob had thought, as he saw the empty seat beside the man, and then had wondered who he might be; for strangers were uncommon enough to be readily recognized. But as he drove swiftly on something floated out of the



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buggy and, whirling about a moment in a little breeze, fell right in the middle of the road. This it was that Rob's quick eyes had seen and that he had sprung forward to pick up. Do you wonder that he held his breath for a moment, and wondered whether he was wide awake or dreaming?

If fairy stories ever came true, he might have expected that a good fairy would wave her wand and bring this very thing to pass; but as there were no fairies nowadays, and no wands that could work such magic, you can imagine how very much surprised he was when he saw that it was really a five-dollar bill that he held in his hand.

Five dollars! So much money all at once had never been known of in the little cottage where granny and the twins lived, except on quarter-day, when granny had the rent saved up for the landlord; and the very last thing that Rob would ever have dreamed of would have been that he should actually own five dollars.

But as he stood there, beaming and happy, a sudden thought came that spoiled it all. Oh, it was far worse than if he had never found it; for to have the gates of the fair swing open, and then close relentlessly in one's very face, was far harder than never to have thought of going at all. There could be no doubt of that.

Rob pulled the brim of his old straw hat down over his face, for there was a glimmer of something like tears in his brown eyes. Of course you know what he was thinking about. The money was not his at all, for he had seen the man drop it, and so



his first business was to find him and return the money.

He was perhaps stopping at the half-way house a little farther along, where travelers often stopped overnight, and if he should be there then Rob could get that tantalizing bill out of his possession at once. It was hard to have it another moment in his hands with the knowledge that it was not his to spend.

The glory had gone out of the sunshine, the sweetness out of the song of the birds, as he trudged wearily and forlornly along. He might have argued, as he had heard boys argue, that "finding's keepings," but the boy-granny had brought up knew better than that. He might have said that if the man was so careless he deserved to lose his money, but that was no argument to honest little Rob.

The money belonged to that man, and he should have it if Rob could find him, and if he had not stopped, then the money should be carefully put away and kept, if it need be, for years, until the man should come that way again.

It was a long walk for weary feet that had grown lagging with disappointment, but Rob kept bravely on, and as he came near the little hotel he saw that his surmise that perhaps the man had stopped there had been correct; for there was the buggy standing in the yard, and the hostler was leading the horse out to drink.

"Where's the man that owns that buggy?" asked Rob, walking up to the hostler.



"He's a-setting there on the side porch," answered the man; and Rob found him there, in a big arm-chair, tipped comfortably back against the wall, looking as if he found this cool place much more comfortable than riding along in the sun.

"Here's your money," said Rob, walking up to him, and thrusting out the bill as quickly as if he feared that he might lose it if he did not at once restore it to its owner.

The man took it and looked at it, and then he looked at Rob, and shoved his hat back as if that would help him to get his ideas straightened out.

"It's yours, you know," explained Rob, simply, seeing that he looked a little bewildered. "I was walking along the road when you went past, and you pulled out your handkerchief, and this fell out, and you did not see it, and I did not remember it was yours until you were too far away to call after."

"And so you hunted me up to give it back to me," said the man. "That was a good little shaver. Well, sonny, what do you expect for it?"

Rob colored furiously.

"I don't want nothing," he said, stepping back proudly. "I didn't bring it back to you for that. I brought it to you because it was yours."

"Here, wait a bit, and sit down and cool off," said the man as Rob turned to go; "let's have a little chat. Why didn't you keep it? Hadn't you any way of spending such a pile?"

"I guess so," answered Rob, enthusiastically. "I rather guess so, sir. Roberta, that's my twin, and me, we could go to the fair, and we could bring



granny home something; she don't like to go to fairs, or else we would have taken her too; and we could maybe get a basket fixed up with pop-corn and apples, and sell them there and make some more money."

"Got a good business head on your shoulders," nodded the man, approvingly. "That wouldn't be a bad scheme—to turn a penny at the fair yourself; I'm going to do that if I can. But look here, bub; did it occur to you that you might have made a mistake—that this mightn't be a five-dollar bill?"

"Why, of course it is," said Rob, earnestly. "Just look at it. I haven't seen such a lot of five-dollar bills, but I guess I know one when I see one."

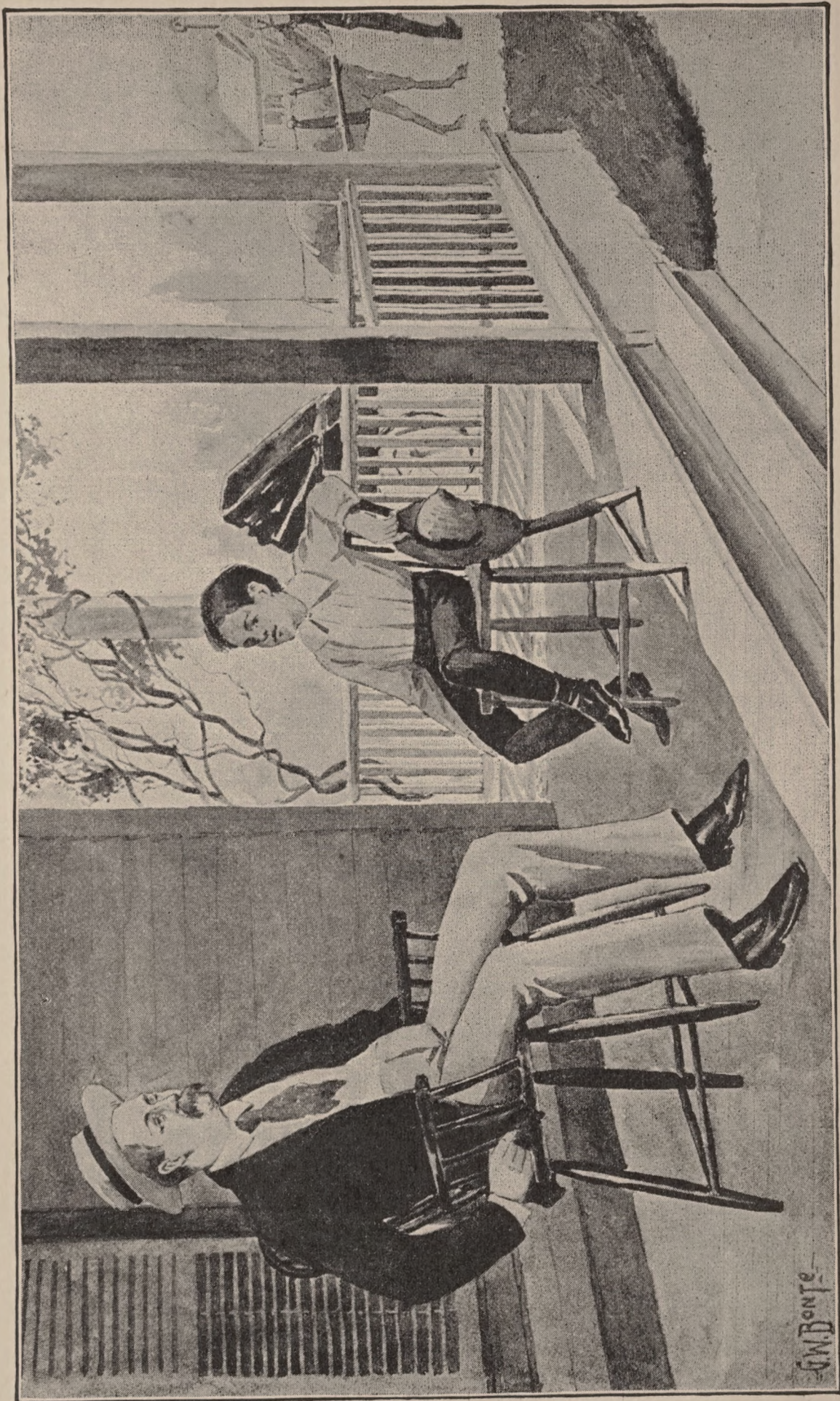
"Well, I guess, though you are a smart little chap, that you can get left on things sometimes," laughed the man, and then turning over the bill, he pointed out to the puzzled boy a neat advertisement of "J. Nathan, Men's Furnishing Goods," with the street and number. It was only an advertising scheme, but it was so neatly done that none but a very observing person would have noticed at first glance that it was not really good money.

"Oh!" said Rob, and then, after a moment during which his face fell, "oh!" he said again.

"Well, what's the matter?" asked the man. He liked this sturdy, straightforward little fellow.

"I was just thinking if I had only noticed that I wouldn't have been so awfully disappointed when I remembered that it wasn't mine, and that we couldn't keep it to spend going to the fair. And then I should have known that you wouldn't want





G.W. Donte







it, and I shouldn't have come 'way up here after you."

The stranger was a very sociable sort of a man, Rob thought, as he asked quite particularly about the fair, and learned how the children had spent their fair money buying medicine for granny.

"Of course it's all right," said Rob; "only—only we did want to go so bad."

"I see," said the man, thoughtfully. "Look here, my little man; I have a fine idea. I am to be at the fair to exhibit swings, tricycles, and other things, like folding-beds and rocking-chairs; and I shall want some help. I shouldn't wonder if you were just the one I want. We'll try it anyway, and you talk to your granny about it. If you will come and help me every day while the fair lasts, I'll give you a pass for your little sister, so she can come and see you as often as she wants to, and then, if you do as well as I think you will, you shall have a real five dollars of your own."

It was worth five dollars to any one who loved boys to see Rob's face just then. A radiant flush illumined it, and his eyes fairly danced.

"Oh, do you mean that?" he asked, almost doubting whether his ears had not deceived him.

"Yes, sir; that's a bargain. Here's my hand on it."

And so the bargain was made, subject to granny's approval, though Rob was very sure that she would be as delighted as he was. How he sped home, forgetting that he had ever been tired, that he might carry the good news to granny and Roberta! and how they listened to his story, while granny



approved his honesty, and was glad that he had not even been tempted to keep what was not his own, no matter how much he might want it. Oh, it was a day to be remembered in the little cottage!

And the fair? *Our* fair, as Rob called it, with a proud sense of proprietorship. Never had there been a fair as great, as beautiful, and as busy to him as the one at which he assisted.

No one could have asked for a more willing and diligent little assistant. He operated the folding-beds with an air of pride that said plainly, "You see, any one with ordinary intelligence can manage a little thing like this."

He swung in the swings until every child at the fair petitioned for one, and the tricycles seemed to look at him with a knowing air, he took such pride in them. And Roberta was so happy in watching his greatness that she came every day and stayed till he went home, and hardly cared to visit the rest of the fair, that particular exhibit was so fascinating to her.

The man who had been so much pleased with Rob liked Roberta just as well, and many a nice little fairing he gave her, with permission besides to ride in the swing whenever she chose.

Such happiness! It was something to be talked about for years and years whenever the twins should sit upon the gate-posts.

"And to think," as Rob once said to Roberta solemnly—"to think it was the five-dollar bill that, after all, wasn't a five-dollar bill that took us to the fair!—"



## APRON-STRINGS

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IF Charley had not been such a popular boy and so well liked by all his companions, there is no doubt but that he would often have been taunted with "being tied to his mother's apron strings." But he was such a splendid fellow, and so gifted with all the qualities that go toward making a boy a hero in the eyes of other boys, that the taunt was never flung at him but once. A boy who was the captain of a foot-ball team, the best runner, and almost the best jumper in school, could hardly be accused of girlishness, which is what the term "apron-strings" is meant to imply. The boy who could cut the most intricate figures on the ice, who could ride any horse as gracefully and securely as if he were a centaur, whose muscles stood out like iron, and who did not know what sort of a sensation fear was, would not be a safe sort of a boy for a jealous companion to taunt with lack of spirit.

But higher than all these attributes, and showing a truer courage, to my mind, was an independence of what others might think or say that made it a natural and easy thing for him to excuse himself from any gathering at an earlier hour than some of the others, and say frankly and gracefully, "Mother



wishes me to come home early;" that made him gentle and thoughtful to every woman for his mother's sake, apart from a natural chivalry; that made him promptly decline invitations of which he knew his mother would not approve without any attempt to hide the real reason; that made him openly avow that his mother was his chief confidante and "chum," and that he did not care to have anything to do with things that he could not tell her. And the boys had grown so used to it, and recognized so well that this loyalty to his mother was a part of the Charley who was leader of the school, that it never occurred to any of them to criticize him or sneer at him for what was really the very crown of a splendid character. He was so popular that his example was followed more or less by many of the boys who might otherwise have thought that a deference to their mothers' wishes was something to be ashamed of instead of acknowledged.

One of the boys at school had a cousin two or three years older than himself, who often came over from the town a few miles distant to spend a short time and enjoy the skating or bobbing, and through his frequent visits he was almost as well acquainted with the boys as if he lived in the same place with them. He had taken a great fancy to Charley, and had several times invited him to come over and make him a visit; but he was not just the kind of boy that Charley himself cared to become very intimate with, and he was quite sure of his mother's disapproval of many of his manners.

Hugh was seventeen, and felt himself to be at



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least twenty-five, although he was still young enough to enjoy boyish sports with all the zest of his age. He affected a great contempt for the wishes of "the governor" and "the old lady," as he disrespectfully called his parents, and led the boys to believe that he invariably had his own way far more than was really the case, although he was self-willed enough to cause his friends a great deal of anxiety. The height of manliness, in his eyes, was attained by a swaggering manner and a cigar, with his hat cocked rakishly upon the side of his head; and he was as careful to disguise any good impulses he had as if they would be a disgrace to him.

His parents felt more at ease about him when he was visiting his cousin than at any other time, for then he was thrown in company with boys who had no sympathy with his unwholesome tastes, which were, after all, more acquired by evil associations than natural to him; and they were sure that for the time at least he would not be getting into any scrapes, but taking part in wholesome boyish pleasures.

None of the boys really liked him or approved of his language and manners, and yet the fact that he was a little older than they were, and was the only son of wealthy parents, with an apparently unbounded supply of pocket-money, and was allowed to have his own way in matters in which they were under their parents' control, gave them a sort of deference that they hardly acknowledged even to themselves, and the two or three boys that



he singled out as friends felt unconsciously flattered by this preference.

He had taken a warm liking to Charley, and there was so much that he admired in the boy that he was almost insensibly influenced when he was with him by his higher standard of true manliness. He never felt like using certain words when he was with Charley that he was in the habit of using freely when with his associates at home. He never met with any sympathy from Charley when he told stories of his cunning in defeating his mother's wishes, and once, when he had told a crowd of boys of some particularly flagrant disregard of her wishes, that cost her a night of anxiety and a day of illness, he met Charley's eyes fixed upon him with a cool disdain, as he said, "And you call yourself a gentleman!"

No other rebuke could have stung him more, for he was continually striving to be thought a "gentleman" according to his interpretation of the word, which was, after all, totally false, and was a mixture of a coward, a bully, and a rake. He never told any more such stories when Charley was about.

Yet there was enough good about the boy, overgrown as it was by his false ideas of manliness and his bad habits, to wish that he might have the friendship of this boy, who, though much younger than himself, was his superior in both athletics and scholarship, and he could not help admiring the very qualities which he disdained to cultivate in himself.

While Charley did not admire Hugh, yet he was



insensibly flattered by his advances and by being treated by him as if he were older than others. A boy always likes the companionship of another older than himself rather than younger, and Charley was no exception to other boys in this matter.

One afternoon Hugh came over somewhat unexpectedly to his cousin, and joined the boys when they were all out on the long hill, that was in prime condition for coasting.

When he had an opportunity he drew Charley aside from the others and said, "Say, I came over on purpose to see you. It's a secret. Don't let on to my cousin about it, or he won't like it because he isn't invited. We are going to have a big sleighing party to-night,—a whole lot of town fellows,—and we are going to drive out along this road on purpose to pick you up and then go out to the Falls. We mean to skate a little while and have supper there, and then we can drop you on the way back, so that you will be home by half-past nine or ten sure. Can you go?"

Charley hesitated. Of course he wanted to go. He had seen the large sleighs filled with merry crowds often go by on their way to favorite resorts for sleighing parties, and he knew what fun it would be. But there were other things to be considered. He did not know what companions he would have, nor whether he could really depend upon Hugh's word that he could return at a seasonable hour, and he did not feel at all sure that his mother would approve of this excursion if he told her about it.



"Who are going?" he asked.

"Oh, a nice lot of fellows," Hugh answered. "You know Dr. Hoar's son? He is going, and some of the students from Blake Hall. It will be a jolly crowd, and we'll have a splendid time. I told them I wanted to bring a friend of mine, and I came over in the early train to tell you about it."

Charley knew who Dr. Hoar's son was, for Dr. Hoar was the pastor of one of the largest churches in town; and he reflected that if Frank Hoar was going there could be no doubt but that the rest of the party would be the right kind of companions. And it was certainly very kind in Hugh to think of him, and take the trouble to come over and invite him, especially when his own cousin was not going.

"I'd like to go very much," he said promptly, as these thoughts flashed through his mind. "Come on up to the house with me till I speak to mother about it, and then I shall know for certain whether I can go. If there is any reason why I cannot you had better know, and then you needn't go out of your way for nothing."

"Oh, pshaw! you don't have to ask permission, do you?" said Hugh, glancing at his watch. "Well, we must hurry up, for I want to get that next train back."

The boys excused themselves, rather to the surprise of Hugh's cousin, who wondered what Hugh could want with Charley when he himself was left out, and they walked briskly over the frozen snow up the hill to Charley's home.



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"Sit down and get warm while I look for mother," Charley said, throwing open the door into the cozy sitting-room, and he darted upstairs.

"I say, Hannah, where's mother?" he asked the cook at last, as, having made the tour of the house unsuccessfully, he dashed into the kitchen.

"She's gone out," answered Hannah. "And she told me to tell you that supper would be a little late to-night, because she would be detained."

"Do you know where she went?" Charley asked.

"Indeed and I don't," Hannah answered, whirling the egg-beater briskly.

"Well, I suppose this settles it," thought Charley as he went back to the sitting-room. It was an understood thing that Charley should not accept evening engagements without his mother's consent, and he knew that, however unobjectionable this party might be, he would break this compact if he went without her consent. And if he waited for her to come in it would be too late, for, in order to meet the sleigh in time, he would have to eat supper nearly an hour earlier than usual, and then hurry his steps. As for asking the boys to come later, he would not have inconvenienced the whole party on his account under any circumstances, and even if he did, it would either make them very much later in getting home or else curtail their time for skating very considerably. There was nothing else to do but give the plan up, and yet he felt all at once a great desire to go now that it was perfectly impossible.

"I'm sorry that I brought you all the way home



for nothing, Hugh," he said, as he reëntered the sitting-room, "but I can't go. Mother is out, and she won't be back in time for me to find out about it. I'm awfully sorry, for I would have enjoyed it first-rate."

"Oh, I say, that is too bad," said Hugh, evidently greatly disappointed. "You must come, you must indeed. What's the harm in going without speaking about it? You can leave word with the girl where you've gone, and your mother won't care. You don't have to ask permission as if you were a little kid, do you?"

Charley flushed a little.

"Well, I never go anywhere like this without saying anything to mother about it," he answered.

"Come on just this once," urged Hugh; "I want the fellows to know you. I've said a good deal about you and told them about your skating, too, and I'll be awfully disappointed if you don't go after all. Your mother won't care just for once. You are not one of the fellows who has to be tied up to his mother's apron-strings all the time for fear you will get into mischief. She isn't afraid to trust you, I'll bet."

Ah, Hugh had struck upon the right argument! If he had said that deference to a mother's wishes was being tied to her apron-strings, Charley would have resented it and not yielded an inch; but when Hugh put it on the ground that his mother could trust him, and therefore would not require to know all about his movements, the temptation to go just for once appealed to him irresistibly. Perhaps he



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wanted to show that he felt perfectly sure of his mother's trust in him. He was pleased that Hugh had spoken about his skating, too; for, though Charley was not vain of his accomplishments, there is no boy who does not enjoy having them appreciated.

Then the ride itself would be so delightful that moonlight night, over the crisp, frozen snow. Oh, he really must go; surely mother would not mind this once.

"Well, I suppose I might as well go," he said, after a little pause of hasty thought. "I'll leave word with Hannah, and then mother will surely know where I am. You say you are perfectly sure that we will get back early?"

"Oh, sure of it," Hugh answered, delighted that he had over-persuaded Charley to go. "I say, as long as you will have to make such an early start, come on home with me to supper, and then we sha'n't have to go out of our way to pick you up this evening. Every half-hour counts, you know, in a short evening."

Charley thought that, as long as he was going without seeing his mother, he might as well accept this invitation; so, hastily scribbling a note for his mother, which he left with Hannah, he went off with Hugh.

He did not feel very comfortable about it, although he kept arguing to himself that it was not any harm when he was quite sure that he could have had permission if his mother had been at home.



"Most fellows wouldn't think of it again," he said impatiently at last, as he found his thoughts dwelling persistently upon what his mother would think when she came home and found that note. But most boys had not such a mother; that was something else to be considered. Altogether, he wished over and over again before he reached Hugh's house that he had not gone. But he wished it far more earnestly after he was seated in the great sleigh, with its six horses and its crowd of boisterous young men, and they were dashing out of town to the accompaniment of shouts, blasts from tin horns, and a general uproar.

Dr. Hoar's son was not there, as Charley soon ascertained.

"Either he or his folks had more sense," he reflected, as he found how unlike this crowd of wild young men were to any companions he had ever been thrown with before.

"Well, I suppose I can stand it this time, but I'll never get caught in such a crowd again," he said to himself, with a look of disgust in his face, as he listened to the stories which were received with shouts of applause from his companions. There were students and students, evidently, at Blake Hall, and it certainly was not the best class which had planned this ride. He was not sitting by Hugh, so he could be as quiet as he chose without any comment. When they reached the Falls and the others buckled on their skates, tempting as the ice looked, Charley had no desire to take any part in the fun. If he were only at home!



## and Other Stories

"These fellows are perfect rowdies," he said to himself as he listened to them; and he kept away from Hugh so that he need not be drawn into any notice. He soon ascertained that Hugh had known very well that there was no prospect of their early return, but had only assured him of it to induce him to go; for supper had been ordered at eleven o'clock, and the party had evidently determined to make a night of it. Charley stood on the edge of the pond, stamping his feet to keep them warm, and wondering what he should do. He would not subject his mother to the anxiety that she would feel if he should be out so late for any consideration, and yet how could he get home? It was out of the question to think of walking, for the distance was far too great.

"Look here, Hugh," he said rather sharply, as Hugh came in search of him, "I must get home. You know as well as I do that these fellows are going to stay for hours. I didn't know I was getting let in for this kind of a thing at all, and I am not going to stay a moment longer than I can help."

"Come now, what's the use of being a spoilsport?" asked Hugh. "It won't matter if you are out for once in your life. What's the use of being in bed at seven o'clock every night? You aren't a kid any longer, and it won't kill you to have a little fun now and then. Anyhow, you can't get home. We certainly can't send the sleigh back with you because you are afraid your mother will give you fits for staying out after dark, and you can't walk; so what are you going to do about it? Have some sense."



## The Making of a Hero

"If I had had the right kind of sense, I never would have been here at all," Charley rejoined sharply. "Anyhow, I'm going home somehow, so you needn't look for me." And he started up to the little hotel at which sleighing and skating parties put up their teams and took their meals.

He consulted the proprietor, and found that he could have a small cutter and a man to drive him home for five dollars. He groaned to himself as he ordered it, for he had a five-dollar gold piece that had been his birthday gift, and that he had been treasuring up for a special purpose.

"Serves me right," he said grimly. "I guess I won't do this kind of thing again in a hurry. But it's worth five dollars not to worry mother more than I can help."

Hugh came up with a companion just as he was ready to start, and began begging him to change his mind and stay a little while at least. Even if he skated for half an hour he could still get home as soon as he had expected. Charley declined so curtly that both boys were offended, and the elder one asked Hugh sharply what he meant by bringing a baby with him when some nice fellow could have had the seat.

As Charley jumped into the sleigh, and the man stood by it with the reins in his hand listening to some directions the proprietor was giving him, the young man who was with Hugh suddenly put a tin horn to his lips and blew a piercing blast. The horse, a high-spirited animal, sprang forward so suddenly that he dragged the reins out of the man's



hand, and set off at a wild pace down the road, the reins dragging out of Charley's reach.

"I guess I'd better jump for it," thought Charley, as he realized that he could not possibly get any control of the frightened animal, and that farther down the road there were places that it would not be safe to pass with a runaway horse.

Watching for a big drift, he sprang into it, but his foot doubled under him, and as the horse dashed on down the road, and Charley tried to get up, he found that he had sprained his ankle badly.

"Here's a pretty go!" he said, feeling that this was the crowning misfortune of all. How could he ever get home now? The anxiety caused him more distress than the pain, which was sharp enough to make him feel faint as he attempted to bear his weight upon his foot. However, the problem of reaching home was solved more easily than he had anticipated. Before he had had much time to consider what he should do, a sleigh came from the hotel, sent by the proprietor in order to overtake the runaway if possible, and the driver took Charley in and made him as comfortable as he could be with a sprained ankle. He drove Charley home, every now and then finding some trace that the horse had been along the road, and the boy was so glad when he reached his own door that he forgot his pain.

"I got nicely come up with for going off without asking you, momsie," he said, as he limped into the hall. "It isn't anything much, but I've got a sprained ankle."



Although he spoke so lightly of it, his face was so white as the light from the hall lamp fell upon it that his mother knew how great his pain must be.

The doctor lived next door, and he speedily came in and bandaged up the ankle so that the pain and swelling were more bearable, and at last Charley went to sleep, thankful that he had been able to get home at any cost to himself before his mother had had hours of anxiety.

But the next day, when his mother was attending to the foot, which was making him feverish with pain, Charley looked up repentantly into the loving face.

"Mother," he said, taking the long strings of her white apron and pretending to tie them about him, "it was all because of these that I went."

"Because of what, dear?" asked his mother, not understanding.

"Apron-strings," Charley answered. "Hugh said something about being tied to your apron-strings, and that you could trust me if I did not ask you, and so I was foolish enough to want to prove that—"

"That you preferred his apron-strings," said his mother, with a smile.

"*His* apron-strings!" echoed Charley.

"Yes, dear boy. Apron-strings stand for influence; it is just a mere figure of speech, you know; and if his influence was stronger than mine, isn't it fair to say you were tied to his apron-strings?"

Charley's face flushed.

"Yes, I guess that's the way to put it," he an-



swered honestly. "But, momsie dearest, I shall tie myself up so tight to your apron-strings now that I'll never get where I sha'n't feel them pulling me."

"They don't get you into scrapes nor where you wish you had not gone, do they?" asked his mother.

"Never," answered Charley, emphatically. "You don't need to make me say that, mother; you know it; it isn't fair to hit a fellow that's down. They are just the nicest apron-strings in the world, and I never slipped the knot before, did I? But you may be sure no other apron-strings, especially a *boy's*, are going to tie me up any more."

And those strong young arms wound themselves around his mother's neck, and there was a great deal understood between them that did not need to be put into words; for where a boy and his mother are "chums" a great deal goes without saying.

But of one thing I am sure: that all attempts to draw Charley, then and long afterward, away from those same "apron-strings"—the influence of the wisest and tenderest of mothers—only served to draw the knot closer and hold him the more firmly to her; and any experience that brings a boy to the fixed decision of what influence he means to follow is well worth while, when it is a good influence, even if its cost is a sprained ankle and a season of regret.



## AN AMATEUR DETECTIVE

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NEVINS MARTIN had a very troubled look upon his handsome boyish face as he sat upon an unopened box of goods in his father's store, with his hands thrust down into the depths of his pockets, and his heels beating an accompaniment to the tune he was whistling, with a far-away look in his eyes.

Nevins did not know a boy of his acquaintance with whom he would not have been very glad to have changed places if he could.

He was coming to the bitter and practical realization of the adage:

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave  
When first we practise to deceive!"

Some months before this time, Nevins had made friends with a set of boys with whom his father would have been extremely unwilling to have him associate. Unfortunately, in many ways Nevins was able to have his own way unchecked, as his mother was an invalid and unable to know anything of his doings when away from home. His father was so absorbed in his business cares that he was quite satisfied if Nevins brought good reports from school, without inquiring too particu-



larly into his associates and amusements during his leisure hours.

When card-playing and, moreover, playing for money took the place of innocent and wholesome pleasures, Nevins soon found that his supply of pocket-money was far too limited for his needs, especially as he had to account for his use of it, and sometimes found it very difficult to enter plausible expenditures that would satisfy his father.

He had complained of his scant supply of money one day to one of his new friends, apologizing for not contributing more liberally toward the expenses of a proposed pleasure, when his objections were met with a proposal that at first overwhelmed him with horrified surprise.

It was nothing less than a proposal to rob his father, and it was no wonder that he was shocked by it. But the older boy represented to him, with cunning sophistry, that he would be in reality only helping himself to what was his own, since all that his father possessed would be his some day.

At last he persuaded the unwilling Nevins to go into his cousin's room at night and take the key which opened the back door of the store, through which his cousin, a boy of about his own age, went every morning when he came down early to open up for the day.

No large sums of money were left in the till, but it was a convenience to have a few dollars there with which to make change before Nevins's father came down to business and opened the safe.

It had been so easy to carry out this simple plan



for small thefts that Nevins was easily persuaded to try it again. Nothing could have been simpler than to let himself out of the house after every one was asleep, go down to the store with his companions, and empty the till of its contents.

The hope in the older boys' minds was that some time an opportunity might offer itself to rob the safe, but Nevins never thought of any plan as bold as that. He was quite satisfied to appropriate a few dollars from the cash drawer. He had become uneasy about doing even this when the frequent petty robberies became a matter of anxiety to those engaged in the store, but he was so completely under the influence of his evil associates now that he did not dare to disobey them.

They even used the wrong they had already persuaded him to do as a lash to goad him on to further evil-doing. If he protested against robbing his father any more to satisfy their demands, they would threaten to tell of his former thefts, and this threat always reduced Nevins to miserable acquiescence.

If he had never taken the first step in this downward path, how much happier he would have been, he reflected again and again; but now the web he had been weaving month by month was so hopelessly entangled that it did not seem possible that he could ever escape from its meshes.

The boys wanted more money, and had insisted that he should get it for them that very night. Nevins had rebelled, as he often did now, then had protested and entreated, and finally had yielded a



sullen assent, wishing from the very depths of his heart that he could shake off the yoke which was beginning to gall him intolerably.

Just then his cousin, Ezra Bowden, came out of the private office with a look of trouble that he rarely wore. He had been having a short interview with his uncle, the head of the firm.

"I say, Ezra, you look as if you had lost the best friend you had in the world, and never expected to make another," Nevins said, as his cousin approached him. "What's up, anyway?"

"Come here, and I'll tell you about it." And Ezra led the way into the large store-room at the back of the store, and seated himself upon a pork-barrel, while his companion perched upon a large sugar-barrel.

Ezra glanced about to see that they were alone, and then began in a low voice: "I've been in having a talk with uncle. Some one's been robbing the till again, and he doesn't want anything said about it, because he is going to set a watch and try to catch the thief, whoever he is. The worst is that it must be some one about the store who knows just how to go to work, and who knows when there is any money left there, for when the till has been empty it has never been tampered with. I tell you, it makes me miserable," Ezra continued, his face flushing hotly. "I'd give my right hand, pretty nearly, to find out who it is."

"I don't see why you need take it to heart so much," returned his cousin, with a somewhat studied indifference. "Of course father doesn't



like the idea of having the till tapped; I can understand that easy enough. But, after all, it's only a few dollars now and again, so what's the use of making such a fuss about it? It's just as well to watch out and catch the fellow, whoever he is, but why should you worry about it? I don't see that it's any of your particular business."

"Well, it is, then," returned Ezra, warmly. "In the first place, it's an awful thing to know that there's a thief about the place. To be sure, as you say, he has only taken a few dollars now and again; but who knows but that, if he got the chance, he would not feather his nest with a good large sum? And besides that,—well, it seems too dreadful to say, but I'm afraid it's so,—I cannot feel sure that uncle does not think it possible that I had something to do with it."

"You!" exclaimed Nevins, in surprise, while his face grew as flushed as his cousin's. "Why, you don't suppose father would distrust his own nephew, do you—especially a chap who is as up-and-down honest as you are?"

"Well, that's what I have been trying to think all along," returned Ezra, sadly. "I never dreamed for an instant of uncle suspecting me, his own nephew, when he knows as well as I do how much I have to be grateful to him for, and how hard I try to do all that I can to please him about things. I came pretty near saying to him just now that, rather than stay where I was suspected, I would black boots in the street for a living; but, after all, I can't blame him much."



"I don't see why not," answered Nevins.

"Well, you see, though I'm his nephew, he really don't know much about me," Ezra replied. "I'm only his half-sister's child, and he didn't ever know anything much about me until mother died, and he wrote to find out what was going to become of me. You know how kind he has been to me—how he has given me a good place in the store to learn the business, and taken me into his own house, though I'm only a stupid country fellow that isn't any credit to him. Of course he can't be sure that I would rather starve than rob him of a crumb, and it is only natural that he should distrust me rather than men he has had and trusted for years. I can see that it's reasonable enough, though it hurts me awfully to think that any one could suspect me of taking anything that didn't belong to me, after mother's training. I'm bound to find out the thief, though, whoever he is, not only to clear myself, but to make sure that uncle isn't going to be robbed regularly without any one being able to stop it."

"What makes you think he suspects you?" asked Nevins, with a little constraint in his manner. "I dare say you are just imagining it."

"No, I'm not; I only wish I was," Ezra answered. "He wanted to know where I got the money for the things I use for my camera, and when I told him that the old man who used to go about in a car taking tintypes left all his things to me, and there had been enough plates and chemicals to last a long time, he looked relieved. Of course I don't think he *wants* to suspect me, but, after all, some



one has done it, and it doesn't seem likely that any of the men he has had so long would have done it."

"Ezra!"

The boy vaulted down from the barrel and responded to the call, only waiting to say, "Don't say anything about it to any one in the store, please, Nevins."

"All right!" his cousin responded. After Ezra had gone he still sat there listlessly, a decidedly uncomfortable expression upon his face, which might have been so very attractive if it had not been that there was a look of weakness and irresolution about it which made one hesitate a little about trusting him too implicitly lest he should not deserve the trust.

A shadow of anxious thoughtfulness clouded his face as he sat there; he was neither a malicious nor a deliberately wicked boy, although with evil companionship he could easily be led into almost any wrong-doing. He was selfish, partly by nature, and partly because his training as a petted and only child had fostered that trait in him.

In almost everything that he wanted he was freely indulged, but where his father did draw the line Nevins understood his firmness and decision of character too well to argue the point. On the question of pocket-money he had very decided views. He held, and rightly, that too much spending-money was a bad thing for a boy, whether he was rich or poor; so he gave Nevins a moderate allowance, and required an exact account from him of the expenditure of every cent.











## and Other Stories

Nevins felt himself exceedingly ill used in this, especially in regard to the last requirement, not realizing what an invaluable business training it was for him.

Though by repeated wrong-doing his conscience did not trouble him greatly about the theft, yet it did trouble him that an innocent person should be accused.

Suppose Ezra should be able to prove who had been the guilty party? His face grew pale at the thought, but he reassured himself with the remembrance that it was not at all probable that what was past would ever be discovered, and for the future he determined that no persuasion should induce him to yield again.

In the mean time Ezra set his brain to work to devise some plan by which he might catch the thief. He was an ingenious boy, and loved to dabble in chemistry, electricity, and photography. He spent all his evenings for the next two weeks shut up in his room, and not even Nevins was admitted into his secret.

One morning he entered his uncle's private office with a bright face. "Uncle, will you leave some money in the drawer to-night and let the fact be generally known?" he asked.

"Why?" inquired his uncle.

"I have a plan which I am sure will detect the thief, whoever he may be. If you please, sir, I would rather not tell even you what it is till I see how it works."

"All right. I'll give you a chance to see how



skilful an amateur detective you will make," his uncle answered.

That evening Ezra spent an hour in the store alone, arranging his camera and flash-light, with a small battery, in such a way that the wires connected with the shutter of the camera, the flash-light apparatus, and the cash drawer.

When all was ready, with a heart beating with hope, he tried the experiment. All worked precisely as he had planned. As soon as he drew open the cash drawer the circuit closed, there was an electric spark, a blinding flash of light, and a slight click announced the exposure of the sensitive plate in the camera.

Turning the plate-holder so that a fresh plate should be exposed, he left it all ready to do its detective work and went home. He did not sleep much that night, he was so anxious to know whether the thief had put in an appearance and how his plan had succeeded.

His hands fairly trembled with eagerness as he unlocked the door the next morning and went in. It was evident that the thief had been there, for the cash drawer was empty. He put away his ingenious apparatus, and waited for his uncle to come; then, breathless with excitement, he announced the success of his effort to catch the thief.

His uncle was somewhat incredulous, even after Ezra had shown him the ingenious mechanism by which he had connected the cash drawer with the shutter of the camera.

"If I could be spared awhile, and if you could go



home with me now, I could develop the plate and show you whether I have succeeded or not," said Ezra.

His uncle hesitated for a moment, but presently assented, and they went home together. Ezra quickly arranged the curtains with which he turned his small bedroom into a dark room, and then, lighting his ruby lamp, he opened his plate-holder and, putting the plate into the tray, flooded it with the developing solution.

His breath came short and quick as he rocked the tray and the black lines began to show. He had succeeded, and in a few moments the thief would be revealed!

His uncle was no less interested now than Ezra, and, putting on his glasses, he leaned over the boy's shoulder and watched intently.

"There are *two of them*," gasped Ezra, as two forms took shape—one bending over the drawer, the other holding a candle.

A moment more, and then, as the lines flashed out distinctly, a groan escaped simultaneously from both nephew and uncle, and Ezra stopped in his task.

No need to develop any more. The curly head, the striped blazer of the boy bending over the drawer belonged to no other than Nevins.

For a moment there was silence, and then Ezra turned to his uncle, his honest boyish face full of grief.

"Uncle, I am sorry from the bottom of my heart to have done this. If I had dreamed that Cousin Nevins had anything to do with it—"



"Say no more, my boy. It is better that I should know it, even if it breaks my heart," and turning away, he buried his face in his hands.

"As soon as that is finished bring it to me, and then you had better go back to the store," he said presently, going away and leaving Ezra alone with his plate—no longer triumphant now, but generously grieved that his ingenuity should have betrayed his cousin's sin and pained the uncle whom he loved.

Mr. Martin sent to the school for Nevins; and when he came, wondering not a little at the unusual and unexpected summons, he did not give him an opportunity to deny his guilt, but showed him the evidence of it at once.

The sight of his father's bitter disappointment and distress was as severe a punishment as any Nevins could have had, and, breaking down, he sobbed out his confession and penitence.

Although he had not tried to exculpate himself from his own responsibility in the matter, his father was relieved to find that his wrong-doing lay more in weakly following bad advice than in plotting such robbery himself. He could feel as if the severance of his boy from evil companionship might yet keep him from ruin and help him build up an honest character.

Nevins was grateful to be saved from the associates of whom he had grown heartily disgusted, and he had realized so thoroughly that he could never hope to disentangle himself from the meshes of the web that had been entangling his feet more and



more that he was thankful thus to have it cut. He bore not the slightest ill will, but rather gratitude, to his cousin for having thus involuntarily exposed his conduct.

Mr. Martin appreciated his nephew's capabilities more than he had ever done before, when he had considered him a rather slow, painstaking plodder; and as he reflected upon the patience and ingenuity that the boy had shown, he determined to give him every advantage that should enable him to make the most of himself.

And thus even the sorrow which Ezra had unwittingly caused became a source of great good, since it gave Nevins an opportunity to free himself from evil associates and redeem the past by upright conduct in the future, and it opened his father's eyes to the necessity of closer companionship with his son and gave Ezra a higher place in his uncle's esteem and affection.



## THE OLD FORT

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"OH, I say, how jolly!"

"Isn't it?"

And there was a chorus of approving exclamations from the party of boys on the little tug that was dashing along the Delaware River, churning up its placid surface into a wake of foam, and panting and puffing as noisily as if it felt itself to be of the size and importance of the ocean steamer which was vanishing in the distance.

It was certainly an ideal day for a charming trip—a June day, cool and breezy, with the blue sky absolutely cloudless, and the river reflecting the untroubled azure.

Professor Palmer always took his boys for a day's outing when school closed for the summer, and it would have been a great disappointment to any of his scholars to be obliged, for any reason, to miss this annual treat.

They were steaming down to Fort Delaware, where they were to spend a few hours, lunch, explore the fort, and generally have a good time.

They had just come in sight of Pea Patch Island, lying like an emerald in the middle of the river, with the gray fort upon it looming up against the



sky. A most delightful place it looked for an excursion party, and as the bustling little tug pulled up to the rather tumble-down wharf, the boys, with one accord, gave vent to their enthusiasm in their school "yell," thrice repeated. They were quite proud of the fact that their yell exceeded that of any college in the number and variety of its syllables, and, although there were but thirty boys in the school, they exerted themselves so valiantly that they made quite enough noise for a large university.

The officer in charge of the fort did not need any card sent up to him after that to become fully aware that Professor Palmer's boys had arrived in the best of spirits and bodily vigor.

The Camera Club of the school, phonetically abbreviated to "K. K.," had brought their cameras, knowing that they would undoubtedly have fine opportunities to get unusual views, and, although they had been frequently tempted to snap at passing steamers or careening sail-boats on the way down the river, they kept to their resolutions to save all their plates for the fort.

Lunch was the first thing upon the order of exercises, and it was very delightful to eat it upon the top of the fort, sitting upon the velvety green grass, and looking down upon the blue river rippling peacefully along, to lose itself in the bay four miles below, and then emerge into the ocean. Little sail-boats were out, skimming about like the swallows who dipped their beating wings into the water as they wheeled and darted in great circles, now up



till they were almost out of sight, and then glancing down as if they meant to dive after the fishes.

The fishermen were out in their heavy boats setting their nets or drawing them in, releasing the shining fish who had entangled themselves unawares, and were now to flap about with their companions in misfortune in the bottom of the large boats. Across the river on the right was a pretty little town, embowered in trees, beautiful old elms which had stood sentinel in the quiet streets for over half a century, and among their foliage rose the spires of the churches, and here and there a gabled roof. The graceful river steamer swept up to the wharf as the boys were eating their lunch, and the picture was so pretty and the light so good that, with one accord, the K. K.'s sprang to their feet and pointed their various kodaks, detectives, and time-cameras at the steamer, with its picturesque background.

When the boys had finished their lunch—and this meal was no light matter with the hearty appetites that their early start and their trip down the river had given the party—they explored the fort thoroughly under the guidance of the officer. The great guns possessed a peculiar fascination, and some of the boys were disposed to linger beside them instead of keeping up with their guide, who was volunteering many interesting explanations and some incidents of war times. He told them of one prisoner of war who had escaped when the fort was in use as a prison, and, although weighed down by the heavy ball which was chained to him, had



breasted the river, and, notwithstanding his injuries and his chains, had made his way to shore.

“And did he get away?” asked one of the boys, breathlessly. They were all disappointed when they heard that the poor fellow had been retaken the moment he landed, and brought back to his prison again, with added precautions against further escape.

When they had finished exploring the fort, the party separated, some to return to a further examination of the great guns, some to go out for a row with Professor Palmer in a pleasure-boat, while others begged permission to go with the man who was about to row across to the town and get the daily mail for the fort.

The K. K.'s were in quest of views. They were competing for a prize which was to be awarded to the most successful photographer in the club, and of course each boy hoped that he might be the fortunate competitor. One boy in particular had set his heart upon it, not so much for the sake of the prize itself as for the sake of the honor. David Murray could not bear to have any one excel him, either in study or play, and somehow he had never learned what most boys learn very early in life—to take a defeat pleasantly. It made him somewhat unpopular among his schoolmates, as can readily be imagined; for it was not much fun to play with a boy who would fly into a passion if he was beaten, and who could not realize that it was a part of the game that had to fall to some one's lot. He was not only a large, muscular boy for his age, but he



was intellectually strong as well; so, by dint of application and perseverance, he could generally hold his own in his classes, and by his strength of muscle in games that required strength and agility.

He had but one formidable rival, and that was Frank Howe, a boy about his own age, who matched David very well both in brains and brawn. Frank liked to stand head in his classes, as he had always done until David came to the school, and he would not have cared to play games if he had not enjoyed victory and strained every nerve to win; but he could take defeat easily, and never had any hard feelings against the boy who excelled him. The position at the head of the class was pretty evenly shared between them, and at last there had grown to be a good deal of feeling, not only between the boys themselves, but between those who had the preference for one boy or the other. Frank was by far the more popular, and most of the boys were delighted, and did not try to conceal their delight, when he stood at the head of the class. This same spirit of rivalry had entered into the competition for the prize for the best photograph, and David's face had not been very pleasant to see that morning when he set his lips and vowed that, by any means possible, he would succeed in getting the best view.

He knew that Frank had four plates with him, and he made up his mind that he would wait and not take his own views until he should see what Frank had selected. With this plan in his mind, he followed Frank about at a little distance and watched him. Frank's camera was a fine detective,



and it seemed as if unrivaled opportunities for getting the prettiest of views seemed to present themselves to him. A yacht with her white wings spread came past the island, and as the light made her canvas glisten like silver, Frank snapped his shutter, and the image of the graceful vessel was caught upon his sensitive plate. All his other views were equally good, and David's face grew dark as he realized that he should have very hard work to surpass them.

Presently one of the boys in the courtyard called to Frank, and, putting his camera down, he left it while he ran down from the top of the fort to see what was wanted of him. It was only some little difficulty about adjusting a refractory shutter, and he soon came bounding up again, to discover David in the act of doing something which Frank would not have believed it possible that any boy could do.

An ugly temptation had beset David when he was left alone at a little distance from the camera. It would be such an easy thing to fog the plates—just draw out the slides the least bit, and then Frank would never know but that the mishap had occurred when he was filling the holders at home, or he might think that the plates were faulty ones. If he had not wanted the prize so much, he would not have dallied with such a thought; but he could not bear to have Frank carry it off, as he surely would if he successfully finished his yacht view. That was a view that a boy might not get in a year. He had not much time to think about it, for he did not know when Frank would return. He



sprang forward, and, leaning over the camera, was carrying out his contemptible purpose when Frank's eyes fell upon him.

"Hello! you sneak! What are you doing?" he shouted, and David dropped the camera and sprang to his feet, too ashamed and astonished to say one word. Then all at once the disgrace of the whole thing flashed upon him. What would all the boys say when they knew what he had done? And he was sure that Frank would tell them. He knew that he would do so himself if he were in Frank's place, and be very glad to have the opportunity to blacken his rival's name.

As the consequences that would follow rushed upon him, he blazed into wrath, and threw himself angrily upon Frank, forgetting that the top of the fort was a dangerous place upon which to tussle, especially when it was not play, but desperate earnest.

Frank was ready to defend himself, but he contented himself with warding off David's blows instead of returning them, and shouted to him a warning that they would certainly fall over the edge if they did not stop their wrestling.

"I'll *throw* you over!" cried David, who was so furious with anger that he hardly knew what he was about. He clenched with Frank again, and the two boys rolled over and over down the slight incline that led to the inside edge of the wall.

"Look out!" Frank shouted, making a desperate effort to stop their downward progress; but David did not seem to realize the situation until they



were at the very edge of the wall, and then his only thought was of saving himself. Without an effort to save his companion, he let go his hold, and, clinging to the grass convulsively, saved himself, while, with a despairing cry, Frank went over the edge.

Then a terrible realization of what he had done overwhelmed David. He lay upon his face in the grass and groaned in the very agony of his mind. He felt as if he was a murderer in very truth. True, he had not intended his words when he had said he would throw Frank over the edge, but he had done it nevertheless in his passion, and had not made one effort to save him. His pride, his intense jealousy, had ruined not only his own life, but killed his companion. He shuddered as he thought of the height of the walls and the hard stone courtyard beneath. There could be no possible escape from death. He knew as well as if he had looked over the edge the frightful scene, that would always haunt him, of a mangled body, so full of life but ten minutes ago. And lying there, he remembered that this ill feeling had been all of his own making. Frank had made advances to him over and over again, and tried to be friends with him, and it was not until he had found out that David persistently disliked him that he had abandoned all his attempts to be friends instead of rivals. He had done such a contemptible thing, first, to prevent Frank from taking the prize, and then—oh, he could never go on living after this terrible tragedy.

The sunshine seemed to grow cold and pale, and he grew almost unconscious as he lay there too dazed



to move. How the time went he did not know nor care. He never wanted to speak nor move nor look at any one again.

Finally he heard footsteps, and one of the younger boys came up, with a pale, awed face.

"I say, David, Frank sent you this, and he says come down and see him."

He dropped a little folded note down beside the prostrate boy, and, walking with extreme care, evidently fearing that he too might fall over the broad wall, he disappeared down the winding steps.

David did not open the note. He clutched it in his hand and tried to think. Frank sent it—Frank wanted to see him; what did it mean? Frank was *dead*, crushed by that terrible fall to which David's hand had pushed him. He did not move. He still heard the confused murmur of voices rising indistinctly from below; sometimes a bird caroled as it darted over his head, and the tug blew a sharp whistle; but these noises all blended themselves together confusedly in his ears.

At last he opened the note.

"All right, old boy. I haven't given anything away; *don't you*, to oblige  
FRANK."

And then hot tears came, and I am sure you will think that feebly scrawled note would bring tears to the eyes of any boy with a heart. Still, what did it mean? How had Frank escaped death? How had he been strong enough to so generously think of saving David from blame and entreat him not to tell what had happened?

It was enough to know that he was living! His



heart overflowed with gratitude for that mercy. He would bear any consequences, suffer any punishment, and it would be light compared to the horror of believing that he had been the means of Frank's death.

But he could not go down—just yet. He wanted to see Frank, but he was too faint to move, too overwhelmed with the reaction to be able to think of anything else but that Frank was alive.

At last Professor Palmer came up. He supposed that David had witnessed the accident, and, not being able to save his companion, had naturally been overcome by the sight. He came over and sat down by the boy, putting his hand kindly upon the head that was buried in the long, sweet grass with downturned face.

“God has been very good to us, my boy,” he said gently. “In His kind providence, Frank has escaped all serious injury, and is only somewhat bruised and of course shocked by the fall. They have been trimming the trees on the island the last few days, and a great pile of brush was under the part of the wall where Frank rolled off. He fell upon it, and it broke the fall so that he escaped the death that otherwise would have seemed inevitable. We have taken him down to the cabin of the tug, and I want to keep him quiet there till we reach home again. I promised that I would send you in to see him for a few minutes; he is so anxious to speak to you. Come.” And as the professor helped him upon his feet, he was shocked to see how haggard and old the boy's face had become.



"It must have been a great shock to him," he said to himself. "Yet I had not known the boys were as attached to each other as I should judge from the way they both act now."

No one ever knew what took place between the two boys in that little cabin, but in those few minutes was born a friendship which was lifelong. The boy who had come so near to death had no room in his heart for anger, and, in his thanksgiving that his life had been spared, he was generously eager that his enemy should be spared all suffering from which he could shield him, and all shame and disgrace. He could imagine what David had undergone since he had disappeared over the wall, and almost his first thought had been to relieve the mind of the boy who had lost no opportunity of proving himself an enemy, who would stoop to anything to injure him.

And this generosity awoke all that was brave and generous and true in David's heart. It was so earnestly Frank's wish that no one but David and himself should know any of the particulars of their quarrel that David promised not to speak of it, though in the depths of his shame and humiliation he would have been glad to have confessed it all and borne any punishment and contempt.

It was a quieter, though a profoundly thankful, party that steamed up the river in the tug a little later. Death had come too near to one of their number for the jollity and merriment to be so boisterous, but they were none the less happy, and by the time the city was reached Frank was able to



walk off the tug as well as any of his companions. Though he felt stiff and bruised, that was the only result of his fall.

Many a hero had been within the grim walls of that old fort, but I account Frank as brave as the bravest of them all; for he had won over an enemy, and with generous heart had shielded the one who had sought to injure him, and had tried to lift him up above the quicksands of jealousy, hatred, and passion which had come so near ruining his life and dragging him down into the depths of despair and endless remorse.



















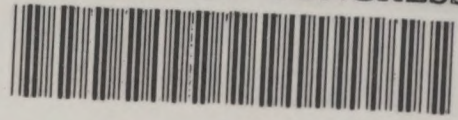








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